

One Day Family Retreat Organizer

Taking a retreat day as a family will naturally look different than doing one on your own, but the goal is still the same: it is a time to **set aside** your daily routines and activities, to **rest** in the presence of God, **pay attention** to Him and His voice in prayer, the Word, and reflection, and to **celebrate** God and His work in your lives.

Prepare

Doing some preparation ahead of time helps us ready our hearts to connect with God. Finding ways to include kids in the preparation can help them feel ownership of the process. Either way, plans and expectations for the day should be communicated to all ahead of time.

I/We can prepare...

Spiritually/Emotionally by:

Mentally by:

Physically by:

By setting some expectations/hopes:

Whatever else you're expecting, expect God to speak with you—be open and embrace His presence, availability, and love for you just as you are.

Every person and family is different, so it will be helpful for you to think through possible distractions as well as the different elements you want to include in your retreat—a suggested schedule is on the back to help you.

- How do you want this day to look different from a “normal” day?
- What things might help (or hinder) being open to God?

Ideas to make our time distraction free:

Ideas to make our time comfortable, fulfilling, enjoyable:



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Ideas to help prepare:

Spiritual and Emotional Preparation:

- Ask people to pray for you.
- Pray regularly for yourself and each member of your family, asking God to communicate to you/them during your time.
- Identify current themes or struggles God may want you to focus on.
- Identify and pray over areas of potential resistance or struggle related to the day.
- Identify expectations for the day, communicate them to the Lord and offer the day to Him to use as He chooses.

Mental Preparation:

- Tell yourselves it's ok/good to rest.
- Remind yourself who runs the world.
- Be realistic that it may take a few of these days to get the hang of it.
- Keep perspective of what eternal things could be gained vs. what work may be lost.

Physical preparation:

- Get adequate rest beforehand.
- Gather any food and supplies you will need.
- Set up a quiet space or spaces (room, blanket fort, etc) where people can go to be with God.

Distraction free ideas:

- Put a temporary ban on electronic devices and/or put phones on airplane mode.
- Take a break from recreational or ministry/work reading.
- Are there other activities, attitudes, etc. you want to exclude?

Ideas for comfort and enjoyment:

- Ask each family member for ideas on what would be lifegiving for them to include in the day.
- Bible, pens, journals, craft supplies...
- Good food (prepared ahead), favorite snacks and drinks.
- Pillow, slippers, favorite blanket...

"...children have a spirit, a body, a soul, and a social context. These parts of their small but equally important person can be gently directed into a life with God. We are certainly not in charge of this directing...our job as their parents, teachers, and pastors is to open the space for relationship with the living God."

-Lacy Finn Borgo

A Suggested Structure for the Day

These are some suggestions for how you can plan out the day. Feel free to pick and choose or adjust things based on what seems most workable for your family. Times can also vary depending on kids ages and interests.

Set the Tone (30 min-1 hr)

Pick something/s to do together to dedicate this time to God and prepare your hearts to listen to Him:

Practice a Spiritual Discipline Together (~30 min)

Choose a Spiritual Discipline or practice that you would like to do together as a family. If it involves Scripture, choose the passage you will use.

Time alone with God (30 min- 1 hr)

Take time in silence to be with God. You may want to offer one or two suggestions kids can use in their time.

****TO DO A HALF DAY MOVE TO "Bringing it all Together as a Family" AT THIS POINT.***

Lunch

Eat an enjoyable meal, thanking God for His good gifts in your life.

Practice a Spiritual Discipline Together (~ 30 Min- 1hr)

Changing pace and resting (~1 hr)

Pick something enjoyable to do with God either together or separately.

Bringing it all together—alone time (30 min -1 hr)

Pick a discipline that family members can use to reflect back on the day and how they've experienced God.

Bringing it all together as a family (30 min -1 hr)

Allow time for each one to share something from their interactions with God that day. Talk about how you want to take what you heard or gained today with you into everyday life. Pray for one another.

You may want to do something celebratory to finish of the day with joy.

For more ideas see "[Links for Families](http://www.gemspirituallife.com)" at www.gemspirituallife.com.

Optional disciplines and ideas for each section:

Setting the Tone:

- Sing worship songs
- Say the Lord's Prayer
- Read Psalms
- Have a [Sabbath Meal](#) (for breakfast or for dinner the evening before.)
- Invite each person to share fears, worries or attitudes that could be a distraction during the day. Pray that their power will be broken over you.

Disciplines to try together:

- [Lectio Divina](#)
- [Imaginative Prayer](#)
- [Meditation](#)

Things people can do on their own:

- (see above list)
- [Journal](#) (either writing or drawing)
- Being attentive to God while:
 - Drawing
 - Painting
 - Walking
 - Running
 - Molding clay
 - Stretching

Lunch:

- Share things you're thankful for
- Read a verse about food (Psalm 34:8, John 6:35...) How does taking time to enjoy our food help us understand these truths?

(Tip: Try to have a lunch that doesn't need excessive prep or clean up.)

Changing pace/resting:

- Walk, stretch, hike
- Take a nap
- Paint, draw, knit, etc.
- Have a snack

Talk about how you experience God in these activities.

Bringing it all together:

- Journal (draw, craft...)
- [Examen](#)
- Write thank you cards to God
- Reflect on what was/wasn't helpful for next time.
- Read a benediction or Psalm
- Sing

Celebrate!

- Have a special meal or dessert
- Pick a favorite family activity
- Dance to worship music
- Speak words of affirmation to each other